

CLAIMS

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1. In a network architecture comprising a telephone switch, an access server coupled to a data network and the telephone switch via a telecommunications medium to transmit user information between the telephone switch and the data network, and a gateway coupled to the access server and the telephone switch via an out-of-band communications medium to transmit signaling information between the telephone switch and the access server, a method, comprising:

a) sending a (status) message from the access server to the gateway; and

b) acknowledging to the access server that the status message was received.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein sending a status message from the access server to the gateway comprises sending a status message from the access server to the gateway that indicates the access server is operational.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein sending a status message from the access server to the gateway comprises sending a status message from the access server to the gateway that specifies the capabilities of the access server.

4. The method of claim 1, wherein acknowledging to the access server that the status message was received comprises sending a status acknowledgement message from the

4 gateway to the access server that indicates the status
5 message was received.

1 5. The method of claim 4, wherein sending a status
2 acknowledgement message from the gateway to the access
3 server that indicates the status message was received
4 comprises sending a status acknowledgement message from the
5 gateway to the access server that indicates the status
6 message was received and that the gateway allows the access
7 server to receive calls.

1 6. The method of claim 4, wherein sending a status
2 acknowledgement message from the gateway to the access
3 server that indicates the status message was received
4 comprises sending a status acknowledgement message from the
5 gateway to the access server that indicates the status
6 message was received and that the gateway allows the access
7 server to generate calls.

1 7. The method of claim 1, further comprising sending an
2 interface status message from the access server to the
3 gateway to register at least one interface on the access
4 server that is available to receive user information from
5 the telephone switch.

1 8. The method of claim 7, further comprising sending an
2 interface status acknowledgement from the gateway to the
3 access server in response to receiving an interface status
4 message.

1 9. The method of claim 7, wherein sending an interface
2 status message from the access server to the gateway to
3 register at least one interface on the access server that
4 is available to receive user information from the telephone
5 switch comprises sending an interface status message from
6 the access server to the gateway to register at least one
7 interface on the access server that is available to receive
8 user information from the telephone switch and to provide
9 status on at least one channel on the interface.

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1 10. The method of claim 9, further comprising sending a
2 service message from the access server to the gateway upon
3 a change of state in one of the interfaces and channels.

1 11. The method of claim 10, further comprising sending a
2 service message from the gateway to the access server to
3 request a change in the status of one of the at least one
4 interfaces and channels on the access server.

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